

ABSTRACT

A method and apparatus are disclosed for providing persistent storage of Web resources. Uniform Resource Locators ("URLs") that identify Web resources are augmented to include a time stamp. A web browser and a web server are disclosed that accommodate a time stamp parameter and allow a user to refer to any Web address with a precise target date. The disclosed Web browser can optionally include a mechanism to facilitate the specification of the desired date and time, or the user can manually append the time stamp to the URL indicated in the "Location" window of the browser. The persistent Web servers (i) receive URLs containing a time stamp, relative or variable time-stamp, (ii) extract the time stamp, (iii) retrieve the appropriate Web page(s) corresponding to the time-stamp, and (iv) return the appropriate page(s) or links to the client. Wildcard characters and date ranges can be used in the variable time-stamp to implement a variable time stamp when a user is not sure of the date for a specific web resource or wishes to specify more than one precise date and time. The persistent Web servers include a persistent archive for storing all of the versions of Web resources that will be persistently available to Web users.

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